Enabling Learners

YEAR 2000: A FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING

• MINISTRY OF EDUCATION •

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The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

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A Message from the Minister of Education

Year 2000: A Framework for Learning describes the framework which will form the foundation for all program development, student assessment and evaluation, and reporting activities in British Columbia.

This document is different from its predecessor (*Year 2000: A Curriculum and Assessment Framework for the Future*) in many respects. It reflects comments made with respect to the previous edition but provides a consistent framework for the delivery of educational programs to learners.

This document is not intended to provide detailed program descriptions. Rather, it describes the broad principles, characteristics and policies toward which all educational activities should strive. The continued development of foundation documents for the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation Programs will be consistent with the philosophy in this document.

The spirit contained in *Year 2000* is intended to help address some of the important problems that have been identified in regard to our education system (such as the large number of students who choose not to complete their formal education). While our system has served the learners of British Columbia well in the past, it needs to change to reflect changing societal conditions.

I encourage your continued interest and support in making education in British Columbia reflective of the needs of our children.

The Honourable Anthony J. Brummet
Minister of Education

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Organization of the Paper

This paper sets forth the policy of the Ministry of Education regarding the organization of educational service for students. It is also intended to provide guidance to school and district personnel as they carry out their responsibilities to interpret and implement provincial guidelines, and as they develop local policies and programs for the delivery of educational service to children. The central aim of both provincial and local policies and programs is to enable learners in the school system to be the best they can be, both as individuals and as contributing members of society and the economy.

Although the paper deals with broad policy and program topics, it is not an implementation plan, nor does it attempt to present details of programs, or of suggested teaching approaches. Information about those matters is included in successive *Working Plans*, and in various Ministry of Education program documents.

The paper consists of five sections. The first section provides background information about the findings of the 1988 Sullivan Royal Commission on Education and about the *Mandate* and *Policy Directions* for the school system announced by the Minister of Education in January, 1989. The second section outlines key principles about the nature of learning, and about the implications of these principles for educational programs. The third section presents the Framework for Learning and describes the general features of the new provincial programs. The fourth section presents descriptions of the new Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation Programs. The fifth section is a brief summary of the paper.

Background

This paper takes into account the views expressed by educators, trustees, parents, and others who responded in large numbers to the first version of the paper, which was given wide circulation as a discussion document in September, 1989. The policies, including the Framework for Learning described in the paper, have their foundation in the *Mandate* and *Policy Directions* for the school system, and in the new *School Act*, which came into force on September 1, 1989. The *Mandate*, *Policy Directions*, and *School Act*, in turn, reflect the government's commitment to implementing the great majority of the recommendations contained in the report of the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education, which was released in August, 1988.

Sullivan Royal Commission

The Royal Commission on Education headed by the late Barry Sullivan, Q.C., conducted an extensive study of the British Columbia school system between March, 1987 and July, 1988. The Commission's report, *A Legacy for Learners*, contains 83 recommendations dealing with a wide range of topics, including the areas of curriculum and assessment.

Social and Economic Change:

In providing the context for its recommendations, the Commission documented and confirmed the dramatic social and economic changes that have taken place in British Columbia over the past 20 years. These changes have placed new demands upon, and created new expectations for, our schools.

These changes include an explosion in knowledge, coupled with powerful new communication and information processing technologies. The structure of the economy is shifting from being primarily resource-based to becoming a mixed economy with increasing emphasis on the information and service sectors. Society itself is changing and becoming much more diverse. An increasing variety of ethnic groups is represented, family structures are changing, the role of women in society is being redefined, and the age structure of the population is altering as older citizens make up an increasing percentage of society.

In view of the new social and economic realities, *all* students, regardless of their immediate plans following school, will need to develop a flexibility and versatility undreamed of by previous generations. Increasingly, they will need to be able to employ critical and creative thinking skills to solve problems and make decisions, to be technologically literate as well as literate in the traditional sense, and to be good communicators. Equally, they will need to have well developed interpersonal skills and be able to work co-operatively with others. Finally, they will need to be lifelong learners.

Teachers have always worked to prepare students for the future and the Commission emphasized teachers' dedication to this task. The renewed challenge for the school system is to provide programs that will help students develop these vital skills and attitudes, presented in such a way that all students will want to participate and learn.

Serving the Needs of All Students:

The Commission found that the school system served the students who intend to go on to post-secondary education at colleges or universities very well. However, the Commission noted that the majority of students do not plan to attend post-secondary institutions, and for these individuals in their secondary years there is an "apparent failure...to offer a non-university preparation program that is valuable in its own right and not simply a second-best alternative...." The Commission also underscored the "disturbingly high" dropout rate, and concluded that "one solution to these problems is to create relevant alternative programs of good quality to attract non-academic students, including those who might otherwise leave school early".

To some extent, the seeds of the dropout problem may be sown in the elementary years, when students are establishing their individual and cultural identities, and critically important attitudes and skills are being developed. In addition to the dropout problem, a proportion of older students demonstrates a lack of interest and engagement with school learning activities. Some of these problems can also be traced back to the elementary years. A variety of factors contributes to these problems, including the student's home situation, economic factors, and the emotional changes that accompany adolescence. Another factor may be a perceived lack of relevance in the curriculum, particularly at the secondary level.

Addressing these problems means more than providing a range of alternative programs in the secondary years. As the Commission stated, "self-esteem must be nurtured" throughout all the years of schooling. Parents and teachers need to do an even better job of helping children to develop a positive self-concept, so that they can have a greater chance to realize their potential.

Need for a Statement of Mandate:

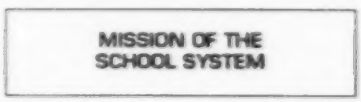
In order to deliver effective educational programs to the young people of the province, it is essential that all participants in the school system have a clear understanding of their roles and of the goals for the system. The Commission recommended that a statement of "mandate" for the system should be created, in order to clarify these matters of direction and process.

Mandate and Policy Directions for the School System

Government response to the recommendations of the Sullivan Royal Commission is presented in *A Mandate for the School System* and in *Policy Directions*, and is given legislative form in the *School Act*.

Mission:

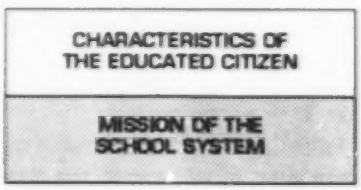
A Mandate for the School System introduces the Mission Statement:



The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

Educated Citizen:

A healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy are achievable when "educated citizens", striving to be the best they can be, are

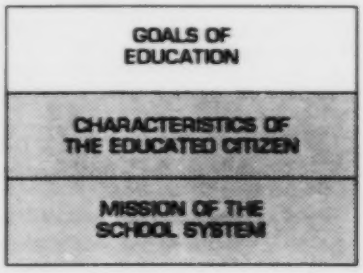


- **thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and to communicate information from a broad knowledge base** (in order to be able to solve problems efficiently and effectively);
- **creative, flexible, self-motivated and possessing a positive self image** (in order to be able to make choices confidently and to take advantage of opportunities as they arise);
- **capable of making independent decisions** (in order to participate fully in society's democratic institutions);
- **skilled and able to contribute to society generally, including the world of work** (in order to help support the society and economy);
- **productive, able to gain satisfaction through achievement and to strive for physical well being** (in order to make a contribution to the well being of society while pursuing personal objectives);
- **co-operative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences** (in order to foster the aims of a healthy society);

- **aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world** (in order to ensure the improvement of society and the economy).

Goals of Education:

To develop these characteristics of the Educated Citizen, the school system is focused on three goals, in co-operation with learners' families and with the commnity.



Prime Goal of Public Schools — Supported by the Family and Community

- *Intellectual Development* — to develop the ability of students to analyze critically, reason and think independently, and acquire basic learning skills and bodies of knowledge; to develop in students a lifelong appreciation of learning, a curiosity about the world around them and a capacity for creative thought and expression.

Goals that are shared among Schools, the Family and the Community

- *Human and Social Development* — to develop in students a sense of self-worth and personal initiative; to develop an appreciation of the fine arts and an understanding of cultural heritage; to develop an understanding of the importance of physical health and well being; to develop a sense of social responsibility, and a tolerance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others.

- *Career Development* — to prepare students to attain their career and occupational objectives; to assist in the development of effective work habits and the flexibility to deal with change in the workplace.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Fulfilling the school system's mission through developing educated citizens requires that not only the goals of the system but also the responsibilities of all participants are clearly understood. As outlined in the *Mandate* :

- the *Ministry of Education* is responsible for setting overall policies, directions, and standards for the British Columbia public school system, and for ensuring that the system provides students with opportunities for a quality education in a cost-effective manner.

- *School boards* are responsible for determining local education policy and developing local curriculum programs in accordance with provincial policies and guidelines, as well as for implementing provincial policies and programs. They are also responsible for governing their districts and schools in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner.

- *Schools* are responsible for involving students in provincial and locally developed education programs in accordance with provincial and district policy. At the school level, teachers and administrators are responsible for organizing educational programs that meet the needs of each student, for assessing and evaluating student learning, and for communicating with parents about student progress.

- *Students* are responsible for making the most of their educational opportunities, for respecting the rights of others, and for co-operating with fellow students in the achievement of their personal goals. *Parents* are responsible for providing the healthy and supportive environment that is necessary for their children to learn, for helping to shape the school system's goals, for supporting those goals, and for sharing in the task of educating their children. The *community* is responsible for supporting the school and family by providing children with a healthy and supportive community environment.

Professional Educators

Schools are vitalized by the initiative, energy, sensitivity, and professionalism of teachers and administrators. The fundamental role of educators is providing quality education experiences for all learners. As they plan these experiences, educators use professional judgment to interpret provincial and local policies and programs. This involves the application of various types of knowledge: professional knowledge about human development and learning processes; specific knowledge about individual learners and the cultural context in which they live; in-depth understanding of the classroom as a social environment; and subject matter knowledge. In addition, it is necessary for educators to understand how curricular learning activities and assessment can be used to help learners develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the educated citizen. Finally, educators provide the links with the home which enable parents to work with the school to enhance student learning.

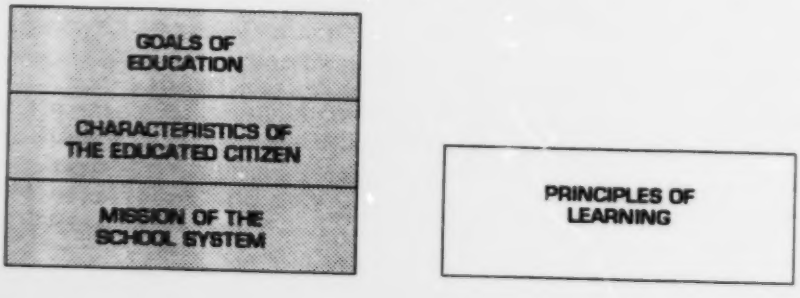
The dedication and accomplishments of teachers and administrators show clearly that they have the will and the expertise to make changes where needed, in order to bring about the improved learning called for by the Royal Commission on Education.

PRINCIPLES

In this section are listed key principles about the nature of learning, and about curriculum and assessment. **These principles about learning and the learner are the basis for the principles of curriculum and assessment.** Together with the Mission Statement, the Goals of Education, and the description of the Educated Citizen, the principles stated below are the foundation upon which the Framework for Learning stands. This Framework, which will be described in section 3 of the paper, provides the basic structure for the provincial Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation Programs described in the final section of the paper.

Learning and the Learner

1. Learning requires the active participation of the learner.



Learning is an active process. It is a natural and enjoyable process, but it requires effort. As they learn, individuals select from available information, and construct meaning by placing the new information and experiences in the context of what the individual already knows, values, and can do. Learning thus involves connecting new ideas to previous knowledge, often without the learner being aware of the process. Opportunities to reflect upon one's beliefs and knowledge are important for successful learning. Sometimes, learning results in the individual changing his or her view of the world in very significant ways.

What students experience in school programs is an important source of information and experience from which to draw in making sense of their surroundings, but it is not the only source. Family, friends, and the community all provide experiences and information which contribute to the learner's understanding of the world. In this regard, positive feedback provided by teachers, family members, and friends to the learning demonstrated by children is very important.

2. People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates.

Generalizations can be made about the learning of a specific age group, and overall trends in children's development are well known. For example, as children grow up, they tend to move from a self-focused stage of behaviour to behaviour that is more socially oriented. It is also observed that children's ways of reasoning tend to shift from those based on concrete objects and on experiences that are immediate and personal, to more abstract ways of thinking. Older children are also able to deal with more complex tasks than younger children.

However, individual differences in rate and approach to learning are important. How each individual learns is a function not only of chronological age, but also of personal interests and abilities, preferred ways of learning, the learning opportunities and experiences which that individual has had in the past, and the characteristics of the current learning environment.

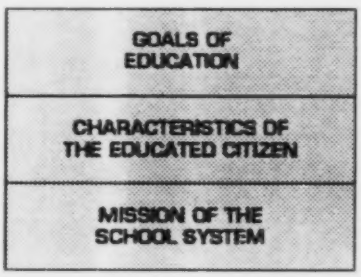
3. Learning is both an individual and a social process.

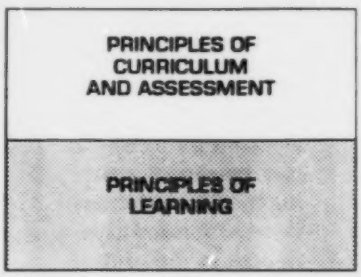
Although learning may be viewed as the construction of meaning by individuals, it does not take place in a vacuum. For many students, learning requires the opportunity to discuss and compare one's understanding of an idea with others. Social interaction also contributes to the motivation to learn, and development of interpersonal skills is valuable in its own right. On the other hand, it is recognized that sometimes students learn best when they work individually.

Curriculum and Assessment

The principles of learning should be used for the design of educational programs. Our knowledge of learning compels us to consider curriculum and assessment components of these programs from the student's point of view.

As used here, "curriculum" refers to both the intended learning outcomes and the planned learning activities of an educational program. For some intended learning outcomes, many different learning activities might be appropriate. For others, one teaching/learning approach may be most appropriate.





"Assessment" is the systematic process of gathering evidence of what the child can do in relation to the Goals of Education. Based upon the interpretation of evidence, "evaluation" is the ongoing process of making judgments about the most appropriate educational program that will foster the learning of the child. Thus, the central aim of assessment and evaluation is to help the child to learn.

Assessment methods include all the formal and informal techniques used by the classroom teacher to collect information about the progress of student learning. These techniques may include anecdotal records, teacher/child conferences, assigned classwork, oral questioning, and classroom level quizzes and tests. Assessment also includes techniques developed and administered at the school, district or provincial level, only some of which will be tests. Evaluation methods include all the procedures used to synthesize the collected information for the purpose of describing and categorizing student learning performance.

Specialized assessment and evaluation methods are used by teachers of visually and hearing impaired learners, speech pathologists, and other professional staff to identify the learning needs of special education students.

1. Curriculum and assessment should be learner focused.

Learner-focused curriculum and assessment is *developmentally appropriate*, allows for *continuous learning*, provides for *self direction*, and meets the *individual learning needs* of students as much as possible, and deals with matters of *relevance* to learners.

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment:

Developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment take into account the developmental levels of learners at various ages. It is also recognized that learners of all ages are able to understand new concepts most easily if there is a generally sequential progression from concrete to more abstract concepts. Assessment procedures concentrate on collecting information about what individual learners can do in relation to standards and expectations about the types of learning that children will exhibit as they grow, while at the same time recognizing that not all learners follow the same pattern as their learning progresses.

Continuous Learning:

Continuous learning refers to making it possible for individuals to work toward intended learning outcomes at a rate that takes into account individual differences while at the same time providing appropriate challenges. This approach also recognizes that learners have different preferred ways of learning, that learning does not progress in a linear fashion, and that learners may sometimes appear to retrace earlier steps in their learning.

With a continuous learning approach, a child is not "failed" or required to repeat a unit of work because his or her learning rate does not match the expectation for that age group. Emphasis is given to what the child *can* do rather than what he or she can't do. When areas are identified in which a student is having difficulty learning, alternative teaching approaches and/or different learning resources should be used to meet the student's specific learning needs. The learner should be motivated to address these needs vigorously and be assisted so that he or she can develop the particular attitudes, skills and/or knowledge that are in question, to the fullest degree possible.

Assessment in a continuous learning environment implies that methods of collecting evidence of learning will be used frequently, and that assessment tools should be available at appropriate times to enable the learner to demonstrate what he or she can do.

Self Direction:

Curriculum and assessment should provide age-appropriate opportunities for learners to direct their own learning, based on their experiences and interests. In order to do this, there must be choices within programs. In addition, learners need to understand the major intended learning outcomes of their program, and they need to be encouraged to assess and evaluate their own performances. Curriculum and assessment should include appropriate challenges for learners and should provide opportunities for them to pursue excellence as they are motivated to work to improve skills and understanding and to meet and exceed expectations for learning.

Meeting Individual Learning Needs:

Ideally, programs should be able to meet the learning needs of all students. Children with special learning needs are the highest priority for individualized learning plans, but all learners' programs should be personalized as much as possible to match individual interests and preferences for ways to learn, as well as individual rates of learning. The focus on personalizing learning does not mean that individuals are expected to work and learn by themselves and, in fact, learners will continue to be grouped in various ways most of the time. Rather, personalized learning refers to the goal of organizing learning experiences and selecting teaching methods in such a way that learners can be motivated and their individual learning needs can be met most fully.

This approach should make it possible to address a wide range of learner needs by using a range of teaching methods, by slowing or accelerating the pace of instruction, by using special materials or equipment, and/or by drawing upon specialized support services, as the situation demands. In some cases, additional learning outcomes need to be identified for special needs students. For example, blind students may need to develop the ability to read braille or use specialized equipment. Achievement by special needs students should be recognized, and all students should have the opportunity to experience success in their particular program.

Ensuring Relevance:

It is important to ensure that school learning activities and the procedures used to assess student learning are meaningful to students. The school is in the best position to be aware of the aspirations and concerns of parents in the local neighbourhood. The district can provide a broader perspective, which can take into account the diversity of needs in the larger community and the relationship between schools as students move through the system. The Ministry of Education provides a province-wide perspective and is concerned with achievement of the major Goals of Education and overall performance of the system in terms of accessibility, relevance, equity, quality, and accountability. The focus at the provincial level should be on identifying the intended general learning outcomes for educational programs which will prepare students to take their place in society after they leave school.

2. Assessment and reporting should help students make informed choices.

Assessing Learning:

Assessment should be seen by students and parents as an integral part of the learning activities going on in school. The learner should be kept informed about his or her progress and should be involved to a significant degree in self-assessment and evaluation. A wide range of assessment methods should be used in order to obtain the best picture possible of each student's learning. The results of

assessment provide information that learners, and their parents, need in order to make informed choices about directions for future learning, and that teachers and counsellors need in order to provide advice.

Sometimes assessment is done part way through a unit of study to identify areas where the teacher needs to consider alternative teaching approaches to meet learning needs, or areas where the individual learners need to place greater effort. Assessment may also be done at the end of a unit or course for the purpose of summarizing an individual's learning achievement and level of competence in that unit of work.

Assessment of learner competence should be based as much as possible on the learner's production of something, e.g. a piece of writing, an oral presentation, a drawing, a constructed object. Ideally, such demonstrations should call upon learners to combine knowledge from different fields, to analyze relationships, to incorporate personal experiences, and to present results and conclusions to others. In view of the diversity of learners' interests and preferred ways of learning, a number of different types of demonstrations and exhibitions may be expected.

Teachers can maintain collections of individual learner's work as an ongoing record of the learning that each individual has demonstrated. These collections also provide convenient summaries of learners' accomplishments for use in parent conferences.

Reporting Learning:

At regular intervals during a student's learning program, teachers should provide "progress reports" to students and their parents about the growth in knowledge, skills, and attitudes which the students are exhibiting. These reports should emphasize what individual learners can do, with reference to the expectations for learning identified in various program documents. In keeping with this emphasis, reports to parents should rarely, if ever, present information on an individual's learning relative to the performance of other students being taught by that teacher. Rather, teachers should use their professional judgment and available information about student learning development derived from larger groups of learners at the provincial or district level, to answer any questions from parents about their child's learning relative to other students.

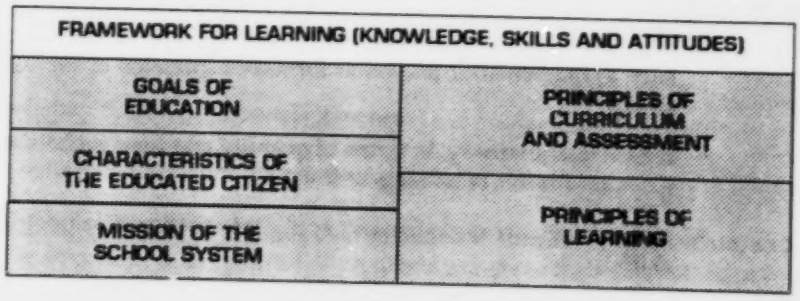
Consistency in Reporting:

In view of the understandable differences among schools and districts in their priorities for curriculum and assessment, there will be a degree of variability in the ways that schools organize for instruction. Teachers need to be able to employ a variety of teaching approaches and, depending upon their experiences and professional preferences, will choose different ways to ensure that an educational program meets the needs of students.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable for parents to expect that the content of reports will be similar within a given school, because teachers will be reporting student learning in relation to the Goals of Education and program-specific goals. Taking the school district as a whole, although different schools may differ in the emphasis they give to certain objectives because of local community priorities, it is equally reasonable to expect a relatively high degree of similarity in their reporting. The same considerations apply to the province itself, in terms of expected variations among the different school districts. Parents and children who happen to move to a different school district should find much that is familiar in the way that the new school reports student progress.

ORGANIZATION OF PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS

Framework for Learning


FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING (KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES)
GOALS OF EDUCATION
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EDUCATED CITIZEN
MISSION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT
PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

The Framework for Learning underpins all provincial programs. It consists of major knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These "learning dimensions" provide the basic support structure for the construction of provincial curriculum and assessment programs. The Framework for Learning is rooted in the Mission of the School System, the characteristics of the Educated Citizen, and the Goals of Education described earlier. It also is grounded in the principles of learning and of curriculum and assessment.

Learning Dimensions

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes develop over time. Programs will be organized so that learning dimensions increase in complexity, maturity, and level of sophistication, consistent with individual potential.

The order in which the learning dimensions are presented does not imply that any one dimension is of higher priority than any other dimension. Moreover, the separate listing of the dimensions is not meant to suggest that any dimension can be considered in isolation from the others. All dimensions are interrelated and many are interdependent.

We enable learners to become Educated Citizens by designing programs and organizing learning experiences that focus on developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of these learning dimensions. The success of provincial and local educational programs can be evaluated in terms of the degree to which they facilitate the development in learners of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes listed below.

The **Knowledge** learning dimension involves acquiring a basic understanding of:

- the diversity and functioning of world social, economic, and political systems and institutions, and the factors that influence these systems, such as technology, cultural values, physical environment (i.e., **knowledge of world history, social, economic, and political systems**);
- the diversity within, and the functioning of, Canadian social, economic, and political institutions (i.e. **knowledge of Canadian social, economic, and political institutions**);
- the natural world and its operation, and the principles with which we organize our knowledge about it (i.e. **knowledge of natural systems**);
- the processes and exemplary products of human creative endeavour, such as literature, visual and performing arts, construction of social and natural science theory (i.e. **knowledge of creative processes and products**).

The **Skills** learning dimension involves developing the ability to:

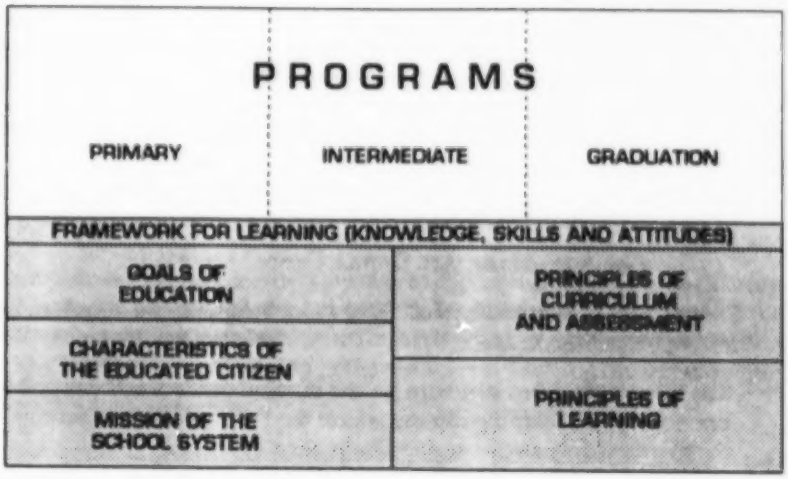
- think critically, creatively, and reflectively (i.e. **thinking skills**);
- communicate clearly with other people using oral and written language, other symbol systems such as mathematics, and other forms of expression or representation (i.e. **communication skills**);
- reason quantitatively, in terms of quantity relations, probability, proportionality, scale, etc. (i.e. **quantitative reasoning skills**);
- access, evaluate, organize and apply information effectively (i.e. **information processing skills**);
- select and use information to develop solutions to problems (i.e. **problem solving skills**);
- use appropriate criteria to select from possible alternatives and make decisions (i.e. **decision making skills**);
- interact with others in a socially appropriate and sensitive way (i.e. **interpersonal skills**);
- function productively in the everyday world, including the world of work (i.e. **life management skills**).

The **Attitude** learning dimension involves developing attitudes related to:

- valuing oneself as a person of dignity and ability (i.e. **self-respect**);
- having confidence in one's ability to cope and succeed (i.e. **self-confidence**);
- being motivated to work toward personal and shared goals (i.e. **self-motivation**);
- being motivated to ask questions, to seek answers, and to learn (i.e. **curiosity**);
- valuing the individuality of others and respecting their rights (i.e. **respect for others**);
- being motivated to work co-operatively with others (i.e. **co-operative attitude**);
- being motivated to take responsibility for oneself and for others (i.e. **personal and social responsibility**).

Provincial Programs

Taken together, the Mission Statement for the School System, the definition of the Educated Citizen, the Goals of Education, the principles of learning, the principles of curriculum and assessment, and the Framework for Learning provide a strong foundation for the development of new provincial programs. The structure of the new provincial programs has been defined within the general parameters provided by these foundational elements.



Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation Programs

The thirteen years of schooling are divided into three programs: the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation Programs. The structures of the provincial programs are given their general shape by the Framework for Learning described above. Thus, all the programs focus on common learning dimensions. Each program addresses the Goals of Education through its program-specific goals. The detailed structure of each program also takes into account the principles of learning, and of curriculum and assessment, described in the previous section.

Most learners will spend their first four school years in the Primary Program, the next seven years in the Intermediate Program, and the final two years in the Graduation Program. Overview descriptions of each program are given in the last section of this paper. Details of each program are presented in the appropriate program structure documents, which also include or refer to more specific curriculum documents.

Program Organizers

The Royal Commission on Education viewed the existing school curriculum as "...consisting of a number of related subjects...(which)...may be divided into four major areas: Humanities, Fine Arts, Sciences, and Practical Arts". Reflecting the wishes of the public, the Commission called for a "...form of schooling that will provide (young people) with a sound, broad, and basic liberal education", and recommended the retention of these four categories. The Commission also noted that "...to be relevant, the curriculum should be based to a large degree on traditional disciplines of knowledge and inquiry".

To ensure that there are opportunities for students to experience the breadth of learning called for by the Commission, the three provincial curriculum and assessment programs will be organized around four "strands", each of which will consist of related subjects. Developers of provincial programs will structure the programs so as to take advantage of features and organizing principles that are common to subjects within a strand. Moreover, the natural connections that exist between strands will be emphasized, to varying degrees, in the different provincial programs.

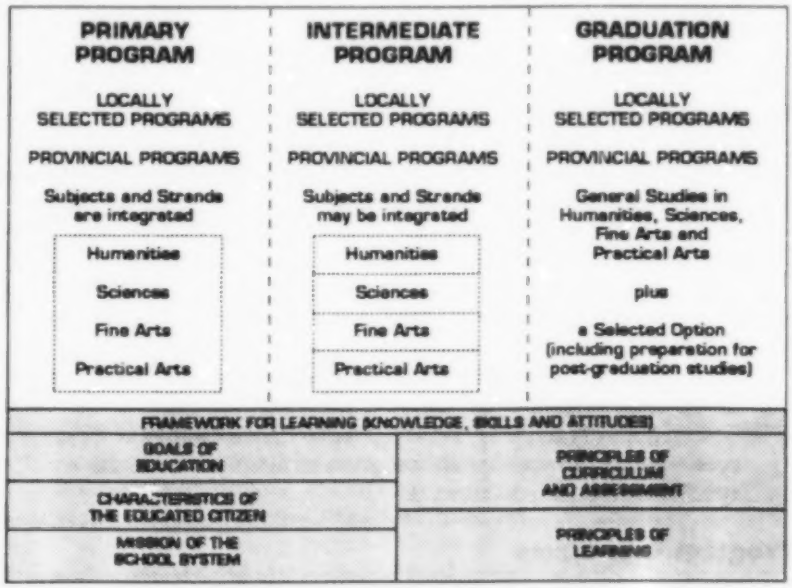
Humanities: English, Social Studies, French as a Second Language and other languages, Learning for Living

Sciences: Mathematics, Science

Fine Arts: Music, Art, Drama, Dance

Practical Arts: Physical Education, Technology Education, Business Education, Home Economics

The overall program structure for the thirteen years of schooling is shown below. As stated previously, the learning dimensions of the Framework for Learning provide a common basis for the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation Programs.



In the Primary Program, the strands and subjects will be integrated, i.e. organization by strands will be implied rather than explicit and the separate identities of the traditional subjects will not be emphasized. Organizing learning activities across the strands and subjects will provide Primary Program teachers with maximum flexibility to help children develop the broad knowledge, skill, and attitude base that they will require in later years of school and for lifelong learning.

In the Intermediate Program the strand structure will be more explicit. By the time they enter the Intermediate Program, children will be ready to be introduced to studies in the four curriculum strands and in their component subjects *per se*. However, teachers may choose to continue to organize learning activities across subjects and across the strands in order to emphasize the relationships among the different areas.

In the Graduation Program, the strands can be used as general organizers for units and subjects. As outlined in the final section of the paper, the linkages among the four strands will be emphasized in the study of issues and themes. A student will be required to participate in both general studies and a selected option.

Program Characteristics

Continuous Learning:

Providing for continuous learning by all students is a feature of all three provincial curriculum and assessment programs, although there are some differences in the meaning of continuous learning in the three programs. In the Primary and Intermediate Programs, the continuous learning approach means that no learner will be required to repeat a year or part of a year. If a student has difficulty developing knowledge, skills, or attitudes in a particular area, then different learning resources and teaching approaches are usually indicated, not a repeat of the same material and activities that were unsuccessfully attempted previously.

In the latter years of the Intermediate Program, learners are able to choose different ways to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined in the Framework for Learning. Regardless of the directions chosen by the learner, essentially the same curriculum is studied, but different pacing and methods are used so that individual learning needs and preferred ways of learning can be accommodated.

This type of differentiated programming must be clearly distinguished from streaming. The Royal Commission criticized the practice of "streaming students into different classes for one or more subjects according to some measure of ability". In streamed programming, learners can be locked into pathways that do not provide for re-entering the mainstream, and which are usually designed to terminate the study of an academic subject. Streaming is inconsistent with the concept of a learner-focused program. It is important that learners are able to leave their options open.

In the Graduation Program, the continuous learning approach has a somewhat different meaning than it does in the Primary and Intermediate Programs. Because students in this Program receive credit for work successfully completed, and certain specific units of work must be completed in order to graduate, a student will need to continue working on any portions of the required work that haven't been successfully completed. However, students will not be required to repeat a whole unit of work or set of units because some portion of a unit has not been completed.

Canadian Institutions:

All students will learn about the historical foundations for Canadian social, economic, and political institutions.

Gender Equity:

As a matter of policy, the changing role of men and women in society will be reflected in curriculum and assessment, and awareness of gender equity issues will be enhanced. Teaching and assessment materials will not include gender-biased material. Program choices will be equally available to both genders, and program requirements will be applied equally.

Cultural Differences:

All learners should develop an appreciation for the variety of cultural groups that enrich our society. Teaching and assessment materials will promote mutual understanding and will be as free as possible from cultural bias. The specific language learning needs of learners for whom English is their second language are recognized.

Native History, Cultures, and Languages:

Curricular content which reflects Native cultures will be incorporated in appropriate places throughout the provincial curriculum, for the benefit of all learners. Special programs for Native learners, including language programs, will be supported.

Programme Cadre de Francais:

This is a unilingual education program intended for francophone children, in which the language of instruction is French except for instruction in English language arts in the Humanities strand. The programs parallel the English curriculum in learning dimensions and structure for the thirteen years of school (Primary Program through Graduation Program). Eligibility for this program is described in Ministry Circulars.

French Immersion:

French Immersion programs are optional programs that involve the teaching of the new provincial curriculum in a combination of French and English, intended to develop bilingual proficiency. These programs parallel the English program in learning dimensions and structure. Where Districts decide to offer French Immersion they may offer either early French Immersion, beginning in the first year of the Primary Program, or late French Immersion, beginning in the third year of the Intermediate Program. Guidelines for these programs are given in Ministry Circulars.

Locally Selected or Developed Programs:

The provincial curriculum for the Primary and Intermediate Program will require no more than 80% of available instructional time. Districts and schools will have the opportunity to provide locally selected learning experiences, according to local Board policy. These experiences can take many forms, according to the interests and priorities of the local community and the expertise of teachers. In some cases, the decision may be made locally to extend the provincial curriculum and to treat some topics in more depth.

Focus on Intended Outcomes:

Intended learning outcomes and planned learning experiences for students, the two major aspects of curriculum, are intertwined with each other and with the assessment processes used to collect evidence about learning progress. Nevertheless, as a rule of thumb, the provincial curriculum will concentrate on identifying intended learning outcomes. Teachers, exercising their professional judgment and taking into account the needs of the group of learners with whom they are working, are in the best position to determine which teaching approaches and learning activities to employ, and which assessment procedures are most appropriate at the classroom level.

Grouping Learners:

How to group learners, and how often it is appropriate to regroup them, are matters for school and classroom level decision making, in accordance with local Board policy. As with decisions about teaching approaches, learning activities, and classroom level assessment procedures, teachers, in consultation with school administrators, are the key individuals in determining how to group learners in ways that best reflect the principles of learning. The three provincial curriculum and assessment programs are adaptable to a wide range of grouping practices.

Learner Profile:

Teachers are expected to keep track of the progress of each learner for whom they are responsible. A suggested way to do this is through the use of "learner profiles". Profiles are records of students' development and indicate what they can do. It is not intended that these profiles would be highly technical or at a very detailed level.

The profiles would consist of "learning descriptors", which are statements about the expectations for, or indicators of, learning development in the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The learning descriptors may be organized by program goals, by subjects, by strands, or by some combination of these, depending upon the program. Each provincial program will provide these descriptive statements of expectation for learning development and, where appropriate, will provide examples of student work that illustrate the expected learning.

Teachers will be able to collect evidence and organize information about the progress of each learner using the learning descriptors. Schools will maintain a permanent record for each student over their years of schooling. Teachers may also decide to maintain collections of samples of each learner's work as a further record of learning development.

Communicating with Parents and Guardians:

It is anticipated that when written reports are to be prepared for learners and their parents or guardians, teachers would synthesize and summarize the information they have been recording for each learner's profile. An individual learner's profile would include the learning descriptors that best describe that individual's learning development, in relation to the goals of the provincial program in which he or she is enroled. This information is important for planning any modifications or extensions to the learner's program.

Reporting to parents and guardians needs to be done in such a way that they can be kept informed about their children's progress, and be as involved as possible in supporting the efforts of the school to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need for the future. Schools are therefore expected to provide at least three formal reports (including the final, or June report) and two informal reports for each student every school year. Should a student transfer to another school, inside or outside British Columbia, the new school will be provided information to assist with program placement.

Large Scale Provincial Assessment Programs

Provincial Learning Assessment Program:

The Provincial Learning Assessment Program gathers information about student performance in relation to the overall objectives of various provincial curricula. In these assessments, information is collected and results are reported for the province as a whole, and may be made available to districts and schools, but results are never reported on an individual student basis. In the future the Learning Assessment Program will continue to conduct large scale assessments that will collect information about student performance and attitudes in relation to the learning dimensions. Results of provincial assessments are presented in the Annual Report of the Ministry of Education and elsewhere for the purpose of informing the public about provincial progress toward the development of Educated Citizens and the achievement of the Goals of Education. Provincial assessments also provide important information for the ongoing revision of provincial education programs.

Provincial and Scholarship Examinations:

Provincial assessment programs also include Provincial and Scholarship Examinations for students enroled in the Graduation Program. Individual results on these two types of examinations are reported back to the individuals themselves and are used for credentialing student learning. Summary information on these examinations is reported provincially, as well as at the district and school level. All students are required to write Provincial Examinations in order to receive credit for the completion of certain units of study in the Graduation Program. This is done as a check that the learning objectives of the units have been achieved by the student and in order to assure parents and the public that standards of learning are consistent throughout the province. It should be noted that Provincial Examinations represent only a small part of the assessment of student learning that takes place throughout an individual's years at school. Graduation Program students also have the opportunity to write Scholarship Examinations in certain subject areas in order to qualify for scholarship awards.

It is intended that, over time, Provincial and Scholarship Examinations will increasingly focus on the knowledge and skills learning dimensions of the Curriculum and Assessment Framework. Evaluation of learning relative to the attitude learning dimensions will remain the responsibility of professional classroom teachers. The examination programs are described in more detail in the Graduation Program part of the final section of this paper.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Primary Program

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the Primary Program is to enable the young learner to begin to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are the foundation for future school programs and for lifelong learning and participation in society.

Overview of the Program

A key feature of the Primary Program is that it is a single program entity rather than a series of separate years. Therefore, the provincial curriculum for the Primary Program will not be organized by grades. The program is designed so that most students will take four years to complete it.

The curriculum for the Primary Program is based on the four strands of Humanities, Sciences, Fine Arts and Practical Arts, but the strands will be implied rather than explicit and the traditional subjects within each strand will be integrated, i.e. the subjects will not be treated as separate entities. In this way, it is intended that children will be encouraged to develop an understanding of the connections among all the things they study.

The expectations for children's learning in the Primary Program are stated in the form of learning descriptors, which are directly related to the goals of the Primary Program and are based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learning dimensions of the Framework for Learning, and on the Goals of Education.

Time Allotments

The overall provincial curriculum for the Primary Program will require no more than 80% of the available instructional time, leaving 20% for locally selected programs, according to local policy. No specific time allotment will be recommended for language arts, mathematics, or for any of the other subject areas, nor for any of the strands, in order to allow for the integration of approaches and content between subject areas and strands.

Learning Resources

Primary Program teachers will use a great variety of learning resources. There will be an emphasis on the use of children's literature, both fiction and non-fiction, to help learners develop their reading abilities. Similarly, writing development will be encouraged through experiences using different forms of writing.

In addition to the variety of print learning materials which teachers will draw upon to work with learners in the Primary Program, there will be multi-media teaching materials to help learners develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the curriculum. Over time, newer technologies will become an integral part of the array of learning resources which teachers will routinely use.

French Programs

French as a Second Language (FSL) will be an optional part of the Primary Program. As described on page 18 of this paper, Programme Cadre de Français shall be offered where numbers warrant and French Immersion programs may also be provided.

Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Primary Program teachers will utilize a range of assessment methods in order to gather evidence of what children can do and to set future learning goals. Assessment will provide information for instructional decision making and program planning and will provide feedback to the learner in such a way as to support and develop the learner's self assessment ability.

Teachers will be able to use the learning descriptors provided in Primary Program documents to help them interpret their observations of children's learning in terms of expectations for children's learning development. They may choose to organize their records about learners' development in the form of individual learner profiles (see page 19). It is expected that for each child a collection of sample work will be maintained, to include especially any work which provides evidence for the types of learning identified in the learning descriptors.

The concept of continuous learning is central to the way in which student learning is viewed in the Primary Program. Students learn at their own rate, according to their own preferred ways of learning. Grades have been removed. Students should not fail nor be required to repeat a grade or year.

Communicating with Parents and Guardians

Teachers are expected to communicate with parents and guardians both formally and informally regarding learner progress.

Written reports will provide information about the progress of children's learning in relation to the goals of the Primary Program and to the widely held expectations about development of attitudes, skills, and knowledge reflected in the Program's learning descriptors. Reports will also include anecdotal comments on the learner's behaviour and on individual accomplishments observed by the teacher. However, the use of grades (e.g., A, B, C...) is not appropriate to report progress in the Primary Program.

When teachers meet with parents and guardians, they will be able to use samples of the child's own work to demonstrate the basis for the judgments that have been made about learning development, and about areas where different approaches may be needed. Teachers will want to discuss the different types of work indicated in the learning descriptors, and where appropriate, they will want to provide examples.

Transition to the Intermediate Program

The emphasis in the Primary Program will be on the individual development of the learner. In most cases, the child will be able to demonstrate the majority of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learning dimensions, as outlined by the learning descriptors for the Primary Program. A child may begin working on aspects of the Intermediate Program while continuing work on some parts of the Primary Program. The student may begin the new program in the same classroom or in a different classroom, depending on how schools choose to organize for instruction. Regardless of whether the child is in a classroom designated as "Primary" or "Intermediate", teachers will structure appropriate activities and learning experiences from either program to meet the child's needs.

Intermediate Program

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the Intermediate Program is to provide learning experiences which enable students to develop their individual potential, personal awareness and understanding of the world in order to become responsible, educated citizens. Program design will be articulated with the Primary and Graduation Programs.

Overview of the Program

The curriculum for the Intermediate Program will make it possible for schools to group students for instruction in a number of different ways. Most learners will take seven years to complete the Intermediate Program.

The Intermediate Program curriculum is based on the four strands of Humanities, Sciences, Fine Arts and Practical Arts. As in the Primary Program, teachers will be able to organize learning experiences for students that take advantage of the connections between subjects within the strands, or of the links between the strands themselves. Alternatively, teachers may wish to organize their teaching according to the traditional subjects or to clusters of subjects within a strand.

The expectations for student learning in the Intermediate Program are stated in the form of learning descriptors, which are directly related to the goals of the Intermediate Program and are based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learning dimensions of the Framework for Learning, and on the Goals of Education.

Time Allotments

The overall provincial curriculum for the Intermediate Program will require no more than 80% of the available instructional time, leaving 20% for locally selected programs, according to local policy. No specific time allotment will be recommended for language arts, mathematics, or for any of the other subject areas, nor for any of the strands, in order to allow for the integration of approaches and content between subject areas and strands.

Learning Resources

In addition to the variety of print learning materials which teachers will draw upon to work with learners in the Intermediate Program, there will be multi-media teaching materials to help learners develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the curriculum. Over time, newer technologies will become an integral part of the array of learning resources which teachers will routinely use.

French and Other Language Programs

French as a Second Language will be a mandated part of the second through fifth years of the Intermediate Program and an elective part of the balance of the Program. A Board may approve an alternative language to French where linguistic, ethnic, or cultural factors warrant it, as in a school with a significant Native enrolment, and may develop a policy of exemption from the study of French for special needs students such as those enroled in ESL, hearing impaired, or other such programs.

As described in page 18 of this paper, Programme Cadre de Français shall be offered where numbers warrant and French Immersion programs may also be provided.

Assessment and Evaluation Methods

As in the Primary Program, teachers in the Intermediate Program will utilize a variety of assessment methods in order to gather evidence of what learners can do and to set future learning goals. Assessment will provide information for instructional decision making and program planning and will provide feedback to learners in such a way as to support and develop the learners' self-assessment ability. Continuous learning is an important concept throughout the Intermediate Program.

Teachers will be able to use the learning descriptors provided in Intermediate Program documents to help them interpret their observations of a student's learning in terms of expectations for learning development. They may choose to organize their records about learners' development in the form of individual learner profiles (see page 19). It is expected that for each learner a collection of sample work will be maintained, to include especially any work which provides evidence for the types of learning identified in the learning descriptors.

Communicating with Parents and Guardians

As in the Primary Program, teachers in the Intermediate Program are expected to communicate with parents and guardians both formally and informally regarding learner progress.

Reports will provide information about the progress of students' learning in relation to the goals of the Intermediate Program and to the widely held expectations about knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are reflected in the Program's learning descriptors.

When teachers meet with parents and guardians, they will be able to use samples of the student's own work to demonstrate the basis for the judgments that have been made about learning development, and about areas where different approaches may be needed. Teachers will want to discuss the different types of work indicated in the learning descriptors, and where appropriate, they will want to provide examples.

Schools may choose to report in anecdotal form to parents and guardians about student progress in relation to the learning descriptors, or in relation to subject or strand objectives, or some combination of the two. Schools may include letter grades in reports but reporting should only make use of grades (e.g. A, B, C...) if the grades indicate what the student can do in relation to the learning descriptors and/or objectives of the program.

Transition to the Graduation Program

In the Intermediate Program, the student spends approximately seven years. In special circumstances, a student may begin to work on parts of the Graduation Program while in the Intermediate Program. In the last year of the Intermediate Program, students receive personal career counselling and planning; an understanding of the expectations and implications of the options in the Graduation Programs; and awareness that the student has the right to choose any Graduation Program option.

Graduation Program

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the Graduation Program is to assist students to prepare for the transition to adult society, to the world of work, and/or to further formal education, as well as to a life of ongoing learning and growth.

The program is intended to provide the opportunity for students to consolidate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they have gained throughout the Primary and Intermediate Programs, and also to learn how to apply their experience and understanding as they assume their roles in adult society.

Overview of the Program

The structure of the Graduation Program maximizes each school's opportunity for instructional and organizational flexibility and should allow schools to focus on the achievement of outcomes by students rather than on specific numbers of hours of instruction as prime considerations in the organization and management of learning activities.

The Graduation Program consists of general studies in the areas of Humanities, Sciences, Fine Arts, and Practical Arts as well as specific studies in several different options. All students must participate in and successfully complete the general studies portion of the Graduation Program in order to graduate. These general studies are designed to draw together students' earlier learning in the four strand areas to address broad issues and themes of importance to Canada and the world. The studies will be interdisciplinary in nature and will examine these broad issues and themes from a number of perspectives and through different methods of inquiry. Participation in these studies will assist learners to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they have developed as they work towards the Educated Citizen ideal.

Options within the Graduation Program:

There will be several options within the Graduation Program, from which students may choose. The options will provide choices in the areas of career programs, general liberal arts programs, and programs designed specifically to prepare students for admission to post-graduation studies at other institutions, including universities. Because the selection of an option will affect students' plans after graduation, school staff and parents have a vital role to play in assisting students to make wise choices from the available options so that they are prepared for their transition into the post-graduation endeavour of their choice.

Units of Study:

The options within the Graduation Program are composed of units, some grouped into subjects. Units vary in terms of content and complexity. For example, the subject of mathematics might include a number of units from which students could select at various levels of difficulty, with due regard for graduation requirements and requirements for various post-graduation programs. Each unit is designated as a level 1 or level 2 unit. Some level 2 units require, as prerequisites, the successful completion of the associated level 1 unit or units.

For the time being, schools may organize their program offerings to students into groups of four units and call these groups "courses". In the longer term, schools are encouraged to develop more flexible ways of offering programs to students.

Most students are expected to spend two years completing the Graduation Program. There will be sufficient time available during the two years for students to take additional units beyond the minimum needed for the options they have selected or to meet graduation requirements.

Program Planning:

As part of their experience in completing the Intermediate Program, students will be given a realistic assessment as to what they can do relative to the learning dimensions of the Curriculum and Assessment Framework. Further, they will have received a clear explanation of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would be required for successful completion of the various components of the Graduation Program. With the assistance of counsellors it is expected that students will, in general, develop realistic program plans for their Graduation Program years. Given this preparation for decision-making, students will be free to select the option they wish to attempt, and, within the requirements of the option, the level 1 units they wish to study. Students will not be denied the opportunity to attempt the program option they have chosen. The requirements of the various options are flexible enough to allow for adjustment should the choices prove to be inappropriate.

Career Development:

All students will be involved in some external work experience during their progress through the Graduation Program, organized by the school in co-operation with the community at large or on their own. Any number of possible work experiences could be used by the student to address the knowledge, skills, and attitudes inherent in the goal of career development. Schools should provide one or more units in the general studies program that give an organized opportunity to study personal career development, opportunities and requirements of careers, and the expectations of our society for successful employment. As part of the requirements for completing the unit or units on career development, credit can be given for a variety of external experiences, ranging from informal to formal, which contribute to this understanding.

In addition to ensuring that all students have some form of work experience, schools will offer other units of school-organized career studies within the various program options. These units could be chosen as electives by any student in order to further enhance his or her preparation for life after graduation. A number of units in each program option may include off-site experiences.

General Requirements for Graduation:

The general requirements for graduation are set by the province. Progress towards meeting these requirements is determined through a combination of assessments made by teachers and provincial examinations. In order to graduate, students must successfully complete the general studies portion of the Graduation Program, as well as the specific requirements of one of the options. Students who fulfill the graduation requirements will receive a Dogwood Certificate in English or in French, as appropriate. Students will also receive transcripts showing the work they have completed. Other forms of documentation will be used to certify completion of one of the options.

Learning Resources

The teacher is the facilitator of student learning, and a mentor, who selects from available resources those which are appropriate to the student. In organizing learning activities and selecting resources the teacher ensures that the learner is presented with appropriate challenges to enable the learner to continue to develop his or her individual potential across the learning dimensions of the Framework for Learning.

French Language Programs

As described on page 18 of this paper, Program Cadre de Français shall be offered where numbers warrant and French Immersion programs may also be provided.

Assessment and Evaluation

To assess student progress toward the objectives of the various units and options, teachers will use a combination of informal and formal assessment techniques, as they now do. Teachers will be encouraged to adjust these procedures to be as learner-focussed and criterion-referenced as possible. Teachers will be able to use the learning descriptors provided in Graduation Program documents to help them interpret their observations of student's learning in terms of expectations for learning development. They may choose to organize their records about learners' development in the form of individual learner profiles (see page 19). It is expected that for each student a collection of sample work will be maintained, to include especially any work which demonstrates the student's attainment of important learning objectives.

Provincial Standards and Examinations:

All students will write provincial examinations at the completion of their work in the general studies area of the Graduation Program. In addition, students enroled in level 2 units associated with the Humanities and Sciences strands will also write provincial examinations. The specific examinations that students are expected to write will be determined by the option that they have chosen. Examinations will be administered at appropriate times, and they will count for 40 per cent of the final mark in examinable subjects.

Over time, provincial examinations will be amended to ensure that they are examining what students can do in relation to the knowledge and skill learning dimensions of the Framework for Learning. Evaluation of the attitude learning dimensions will remain the responsibility of professional classroom teachers.

Students will continue to have the opportunity to write scholarship examinations in order to qualify for scholarship awards.

For some of the units associated with the general studies area and with the Fine Arts and Practical Arts strands, provincial standards will be provided for assessing and evaluating student performance, based on demonstrations of work at the classroom level.

Awards:

There are a variety of awards available to students through provincial and local district procedures.

Challenging Unit Completion:

In certain circumstances, students may be awarded credit for a unit, or a series of units, without studying the units in a classroom context. For example, a student may challenge a unit or series of units for credit. A teacher in the relevant subject area will assess the student in an appropriate way to determine whether credit should be awarded. A teacher may accept demonstrable achievement outside of the school for credit in a subject area for which the teacher has responsibility. It is the school's responsibility to make appropriate arrangements to permit students to take advantage of this opportunity. In other instances, students pursuing credit for units while enrolled in programs offered by outside agencies such as the International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement, can participate in these studies rather than those which comprise the school-based units but still receive credit for these units.

If a unit or series of units is provincially examinable, students challenging units must write the provincial examination and the mark awarded will count for 40 per cent of the final mark.

Special Needs Students:

It should be noted that a Dogwood Certificate cannot be awarded unless the provincial curriculum and provincial examination requirements are met.

However, special needs students (e.g. learning disabled, mentally handicapped, visually and hearing impaired, physically handicapped, etc.) will be enrolled in the Graduation Program. The school will be able to modify the Program for these students, in consultation with the students' parents or guardians and in accordance with district policy. Further, the school will be able to excuse special needs students, other than gifted students, from writing provincial examinations.

Communicating with Parents and Guardians

As in the Primary and Intermediate Programs, teachers in the Graduation Program are expected to communicate with parents and guardians both formally and informally regarding learner progress.

Written reports will provide information about the progress of students' learning in relation to the goals of the Graduation Program and to the expectations about knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are reflected in the Program's learning descriptors. In summarizing student learning, schools are expected to use the symbols (A, B, C ...) indicated in Minister of Education Orders.

When teachers meet with parents and guardians, they will be able to use samples of each student's work to demonstrate the basis for the judgments that have been made about learning development, and about areas where different approaches may be needed. Teachers will want to discuss the different types of work indicated in the learning descriptors, and where appropriate, they will want to provide examples.

SUMMARY

This paper has presented the policy of the Ministry of Education regarding the organization of educational service for students through provincial curriculum and assessment programs. It has outlined the features of new programs designed to help all learners in the school system become truly "educated citizens". These new programs are being developed in response to the wishes and concerns of the public, as expressed to the government through the Royal Commission on Education. They are each described more fully in other documents.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities presented by changing social and economic factors, British Columbians called for renewal of purpose for the school system, for redefinition of roles, and above all, for refocus on meeting the needs of learners. At the same time there was clear recognition of the successes of the present system and of the hard work and professionalism of teachers and administrators which have produced these successes. The message from the Royal Commission is that the time has come to build on these successes and go forward.

In response to the Commission's recommendations, the government consulted the major education stakeholder organizations and developed a Mission Statement for the school system. Our mission is immensely challenging but simple in concept; we are engaged in the task of enabling learners to be the best they can be, both as individuals and as contributing members of society and the economy. To enable learners, we need to help them to develop the thoughtfulness, creativity, flexibility, motivation, and responsibility that characterize educated citizens. We must ensure that our educational programs focus clearly on the attitudes, skills and knowledge that are vital for intellectual, human, social, and career development. We must use our knowledge about human learning to reform our curriculum and assessment programs.

This is a time for educators to re-examine the priorities and the assumptions, often unstated, that shape programs and influence practice, and to make changes in order to improve learning opportunities for students. For example, we have sometimes acted as if we believed that some students are more capable of learning than others; that it is not possible for all students to succeed; that curriculum material must be covered in a given amount of time and "slower" learners are therefore a problem; and that structuring learning according to traditionally separate subjects is the best, if not the only way to organize learning experiences in school.

Our challenge is to move to a more outcomes focused system, in which judgments about student learning are based more on meeting high expectations and attaining standards and less on performance relative to the group. In this kind of school system a learner's degree of understanding and mastery of concepts in an area of study are more important in the determination of future learning experiences than the amount of time that he or she has spent in a particular program. To develop a system in which all learners can succeed, with effort, requires new ways of organizing for learning. All of us, working together, can and must meet this challenge.